

From the Author
March 19 —

THE CITIZENS OBLIGATION.



THE CITIZENS OBLIGATION.

A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT

ST. ANNE'S CHAPEL IN NEWCASTLE, AND
ST. MARY'S, GATESHEAD,

On Sunday, September 23^d, 1792.

BY M. MANNERS, M. A.

LECTURER OF ST. ANNE'S AND LATE OF LINCOLN COLLEGE, OXFORD.

Μὴνὰ τ' ἀλλήθινά βίβασα.

PLA.

NEWCASTLE:

PRINTED BY HALL AND ELLIOT

AND SOLD BY J. J. AND J. ROBINSONS, PATERNOSTER ROW,

J. DEIGHTON, HOLBORN, LONDON; AND R. FISHER,

W. CHARNLEY, D. AKENHEAD, &c. NEWCASTLE.

1792.

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S E R M O N

ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH IN NEW-YORK, AND
ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH, LONDON.

BY M. MANNING, M. A.

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TO

THE REVEREND AND WORSHIPFUL

ROBERT THORP, D. D.

ARCHDEACON OF NORTHUMBERLAND,

AND

RECTOR OF GATESHEAD,

THIS SERMON

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY HIS OBEDIENT HUMBLE SERVANT,

M. MANNERS.

NEWCASTLE,

October 25th, 1792.

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ROBERT THOMAS, D.D.

ARCHDEACON OF NORTHUMBRIA

AND

LECTOR OF CATHEDRAL

THE SERMON

IS PRESENTED IN TWO VOLUMES

BY THE REV. ROBERT THOMAS, D.D.

OF MANCHESTER

NEWCASTLE
J. & W. GIBSON, 1854

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Sermon contains, neither Scripture-Criticism, nor abstract reasoning: indeed, no good was ever done this Way, among the Bulk of Mankind; to them, speculative Divinity is as an unknown Tongue. On the contrary, whenever the Truths of Religion are stated and enforced in plain and scriptural Terms, they never fail to leave some Impression of a Sense of Duty on the Heart.

The Author had no design of publishing the following Discourse at the Time it was written; but as it has been fully discovered, that Doctrines, which have a direct Tendency to animate a Spirit of Discontent and Strife, are diligently propagated in many Parts of the Kingdom, it was suggested, that it might be of some Use to publish it, in order to prevent, or suppress all ill-natured Passions; at least, by briefly pointing out what God requires of us, to recover and confirm the wavering in true Principles of Piety and dutiful Subjection,—individual Comfort and common Tranquillity.

ADVERTISEMENT

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
COMPANY, AND THE STOCKHOLDERS,
GIVE NOTICE THAT THE ANNUAL
MEETING OF THE STOCKHOLDERS
WILL BE HELD AT THE COMPANY'S
OFFICE, ON WEDNESDAY, THE
THIRTIETH DAY OF MARCH, AT
TEN O'CLOCK, A.M., FOR THE
PURPOSE OF ELECTING DIRECTORS
AND OFFICERS, AND OF PASSING
RESOLUTIONS ON THE REPORT OF
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JEREMIAH xxix. 7.

AND SEEK THE PEACE OF THE CITY WHITHER

I HAVE CAUSED YOU TO BE CARRIED AWAY

CAPTIVES, AND PRAY UNTO THE LORD FOR

IT.

THE exhortation comprised in these words, was occasioned by men of the captivity, among the Jews at Babylon, assuming the prophetic character, and thus deceiving the people with lying prophecies and false promises of a speedy restoration. Relying on these *deceivers*, they shewed a disposition to neglect the duties of civil life, mutual good offices, and common tranquillity.

B

To

To remedy this great evil, the Prophet acquaints them, that they were deceived,—that by the appointment of God, their captivity was to last seventy years. He then exhorts them to provide for themselves in the land of their captivity, as inhabitants, and conduct themselves as becometh good subjects, till the time that God had appointed for their deliverance.

Now, whatsoever things were written aforetime, by holy men of God, who spake as they were inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, were written for *our learning, for doctrine, for instruction in righteousness.*

Indeed, there is no virtue in human nature, how commendable or amiable soever, which the holy scriptures do not give some examples of and enforce; being stored with infinite variety of matter in all kinds. It is the glory of the christian religion, to promote universal love and concord, to strengthen the bands of peace and good-will, to foster every disposition
that

that can, in any wise, communicate happiness to man.

It enlarges our love towards those whose hearts are not right with our hearts, by abolishing all odious distinctions, all strife and malice, with all railing and evil-speaking.

But it doth not stop here. It knits together those whose hearts are right, as our hearts are with their hearts, and this in such a way as the world before knew not of;—closer and stronger, than men had ever before been united by any civil or religious polity.

It requires all men, more especially all that profess godliness, to be *tender-hearted*, to love as brethren, to shew forth out of a good conversation, their works with meekness and wisdom.

And first, *Seek the peace of the City.*—
This commandment likewise have we from
God,

God, to promote the peace, the tranquillity and prosperity of the kingdom whereunto we belong. But how can this best be done? Doubtless by being ready, on all occasions, to give honour unto the King, and all that are in authority under him; submitting ourselves to all our governors willingly, and not by constraint:—Abstaining from all bitter zeal, fomenting no internal discord or resentment; neither breaking down the fences of lawful authority ourselves, nor inciting others to do so; that being perfect, stablished, and strengthened as an house built upon a rock, we may resist and subdue all that imagine evil.

The commandment in the text is plain enough: there is none in the decalogue more so; it is equally plain, as *thou shalt not kill*;—but do all men study to walk by this rule? Nay, do not evil surmisings, groundless jealousies, and imaginary ills, haunt and disturb the mind, and engender discontent,

discontent, division, and debate, among those that are quiet in the land. These are *murmurers, complainers*, walking after their own desires, whom resist in all gentleness and firmness, lest ye also perish,—lose the *fruit of righteousness which is sown in peace for them that make peace.*

We are taught in the holy scriptures, that government is an institution and ordinance of God; being an instrument used by providence, as the best provision for the general happiness of his reasonable creation. St. Paul writing to the Romans, in plain and ~~per~~emptory terms, insists, that as magistrates are “the ministers of God for good,” we should obey, and do every thing which is not expressly forbidden in the word of God: *Let every soul be subject to the supreme Powers.* The Apostle Peter urges the same doctrine, and herein they concur with God our Saviour Jesus Christ. “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, whether it be
to

“ to the king as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him.” Obey and assist them, shew them the respect due unto their station, neither say nor do any thing that may lessen or weaken their authority ; for if a kingdom be divided against itself, it is brought to desolation, and if a city or house be divided against itself, can that house or city stand ? In no wise, for civil and domestic commotions always directly tend to interior desolation,

It is true indeed, that governors *instrumentally* are ordained by men, but *originally* their power is from God. “ For there “ is no power but of God ; the powers “ that be, are ordained of God.” Who- soever therefore resisteth, otherwise than the laws of the community direct, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive *condemnation*, punishment in this world and in that which is to come, for none can change the word of God.

Authority

Authority and distinctions are absolutely necessary, indeed it does not seem possible to conceive how mankind, since they have lost their original rectitude, can subsist without them.

As yet, neither magistrates nor wholesome laws, have been able to suppress disorder, injustice and impiety; that complication of hateful and violent passions which is in the world. Nor can they; for all that is good cometh down from above: If the least part of that good could fall into the heart of man, pure as it is in its source, this world would then become a paradise; but as long as we dwell in this earthly tenement, we have no reason to expect this. We see, indeed, this great blessing, "but not now, we behold it, "but not nigh."

*It is written; It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills,
and*

and all nations shall flow unto it. And they shall beat their swords into plough shares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

The wolf shall then dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

They shall not hurt nor destroy, saith the Lord, in all my holy mountain. For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Again, opposition even to unjust government, doth not appear to be sanctioned by the holy scriptures; they inculcate subjection, not merely for wrath, the avoiding penalties or punishment, but for conscience sake,—out of obedience to God.

“ They that received tribute money,
 “ came to Peter, and said, Doth not your
 “ master

" master pay the tribute? He saith, Yes.
 " And when he came into the house, Jesus
 " prevented him, saying, What thinkest
 " thou Simon, of whom do the kings of the
 " earth take tribute, of their children or
 " of strangers? He saith unto him, of
 " strangers. Jesus saith unto him, then
 " are the children free. But that we may
 " not offend them, go to the sea, and cast an
 " hook, and take the fish that first cometh
 " up. And when thou hast opened his
 " mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money.
 " That take, and give" these unjust, un-
 reasonable men, who demand, what, by
 the law of the nation, they have no
 right to, " for thee and me."

And here in the text, the Israelites were
 exhorted to observe the same rule, to
 violate neither the peace nor laws of Baby-
 lon, nay to pray for that heathen, tyran-
 nical and oppressive nation.

Much more, surely, must it be our duty
 by loyalty, submission, and love, and every
 C instance

instance of good and peaceable conduct, to promote the happiness and tranquillity of the country, wherein we were born, to seek the quiet and welfare of the best and most gentle government, where all things are ordered and settled, according to the law of justice, mercy and truth.

Hence we learn our obligations : indeed, a necessity lieth upon us, “ to render to all their due ; tribute, to whom tribute is due ; custom, to whom custom ; fear, to whom fear ; and honour, to whom honour.” All these are due to the *supreme powers* : And can any thing be more reasonable, than that, by all possible means, we promote the peace and prosperity of the kingdom, which protects us in our lives, liberty and property.

Behold the liberty, civil and religious, we this day enjoy !

First, we are subjects of a state, where the protestant religion is fully established,
—purged

—purged from all the errors, which ignorance, superstition and despotism had introduced into the church of God.

The holy scriptures, which contain the words of eternal life, are in our hands, and the worship of God is performed in a language which all understand; over and above this, all men are at liberty to worship God unmolested, according to the dictates of conscience.

Look into the christian world, and can we find an *establishment more truly scriptural, blest with a purer liturgy, or more apostolical form of government.*

Again, do we enjoy civil liberty in a less degree than religious?

Civil liberty is a right to enjoy our life, liberty and property, that is, whatever is legally ours, according to our own will, with this limitation, that we neither pre-

judice nor infringe the laws of the community.

But, did our ancestors, from the conquest to the revolution, or doth any kingdom in Europe enjoy such spiritual and civil liberty? No such thing: we alone are fortunate to have them in such a degree, as was never known before,

Are we followers of that which is good, studious of peace, always minding our own business, then, who can harm us?

It is manifest, as certain as God is in Heaven, that we are in danger of losing neither our life, liberty nor property. Are these in jeopardy, in any degree invaded, it will be by the hands of ignorant and impetuous spirits, urged on by the flight and cunning craftiness of wicked men, who would loosen the cement of society, and bereave us of our *national and individual peace and happiness.*

Now

Be thankful for these singular benefits; bless God, that you belong to a kingdom, so constituted, that government is the dictate of religion, and religion the pillar and support of civil government; for "of law," or good government, "no less can be acknowledged, than that *her* seat is the bosom of God, *her* voice the harmony of the world. All things in heaven and earth do *her* homage: The very least, as feeling *her* care; and the greatest, as not exempt from *her* power."

Be grateful, learn to be quiet, to follow peace and holiness, that so an entrance may be ministered to you, into the everlasting kingdom of Christ.

As far, therefore, as the sphere of our influence extends, we must labour to instill sound principles of religion, and subordination, to discourage all groundless and unreasonable clamours, which tend to infuse scruples and discontent, to alienate the mind, and clog the springs and wheels
of

of the government, which thus protects us and our children.

Being this way employed, every doctrine which novelty, the ebullitions of the imagination, or the refinements of philosophy would introduce, to poison and disturb the community, will be blasted before they be grown up. Thus shall we seek the peace of the city, and thus shew ourselves deserving of the constitution and laws, which so particularly distinguish the British nation, and which it will be our wisdom to preserve, and transmit to those that come after us.

But secondly, we must pray unto the Lord for it.——

To pray, is to lift up in an holy manner, our hearts and hands to God, and beseech him to give us all things needful for life, peace and godliness.

We

We know, that the prayer of a righteous man, one *that feareth God and performeth* the duties and works of righteousness, availeth much. Indeed, no costly perfume, neither the Gold of Ophir, nor the spicy mountains of Arabia, are so acceptable to God, as the fragrancy,—the aspirations of a pious heart, when the oblation is made in faith, nothing doubting. Elijah prayed that it might not rain, and it rained not. He prayed again, and the heavens gave rain. Moses, also, who was a faithful minister and mediator for a testimony of the things which were afterwards to be spoken, when Jehovah had determined to destroy the congregation, stood in the gap, deprecated the divine vengeance, and obtained forgiveness for that rebellious people. “ He repented him of
“ the evil, and destroyed them not.”

As good subjects, we, in like manner, are bound to pray for the peace and welfare of our church and nation, in this troublesome and contentious world. More
especially

especially in the words of Isaiah, that there may be no din of war, *no confused noise, no garments rolled in blood*, no kingdom or city divided against itself, no civil discord, to cut one another off from the earth;—that there may be no fraud, jealousy or anger, no oppression or extortion, but *that our officers may be peace, and our exactors righteousness*: No wrong or robbery in our streets, wasting or destruction within our borders; but that righteousness and peace may kiss each other, flourish from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

Then *pray* for the peace of *Jerusalem*; they shall prosper that love thee, the protection of Heaven shall be upon the work of their hands, for the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers.

“ Come then, O thou divine spirit of
 “ peace and love, and fill us with every
 “ heavenly temper; put an end to all here-
 “ sies and schisms, cause bitter contentions
 “ to

“ to cease, abolish every enmity, and make
 “ us to be of one mind in thy holy city ;
 “ that so, peace being within” our “ walls,
 “ the citizens may give themselves to every
 “ profitable employment.” But it is ob-
 vious enough, that without the aid and
 assistance of God’s holy spirit, our prayers
 and endeavours to promote the prosperity
 and peace of the nation will always prove
 inadequate. God only can allay the ferment
 of human passions, can dispose and govern
 the unruly tempers and lusts of men.

There are many considerations, and all
 of them of sufficient force, to induce us to
pray that the course of this world may be
 so ordered, that the inhabitants thereof,
 may serve their heavenly father in all godly
 quietness ; but these memorable words
 may suffice. “ *Blessed are the peace-makers,*”
 those who refrain their tongue from evil,
 and their lips, that they speak no guile,
 that eschew evil and do good, “ *for they*
 “ *shall be called the children of God.*”

D

Do

Do we in all things, whether of a religious or civil nature, steadily pursue mutual comfort, and common tranquillity? then go on; thus glorify your father which is in heaven: Let all men see these your good works, that your only contention, in this world, is to emulate one another in all that is lovely, amiable, and of good report. Thus, in the words of the prophet, “our eyes shall see Jerusalem, a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall be removed, neither shall any of the cords be broken.” “Happy are the people that are in such a case,” flourishing in outward peace and happiness, beautiful in inward holiness, and as much as can be, in this world, without spot or blemish.

The conclusion. It scarce needs remarking, that diversity of sentiment, even among men of honest minds and good hearts, there will be, as long as the world stands.

But

But why should every discontented and ambitious individual, who *was never designed to sit in council*, claim the exorbitant liberty to oppose the maxims, laws and accumulated wisdom of those, who are delegated to govern?—Why should every individual person, fancy himself at liberty to act as his views, prejudices or disaffection prompt him?—To gnaw the cords of just authority, as if they were the galling chains of despotism; to murmur and to debate every thing, which doth not correspond with his own pre-established system, his own doctrine and interpretation.

“If the feet, will take upon them to direct the head;—if the hands, will see for the eye; if subjects will be rulers, and prescribe where they should obey;” all order must be dissolved, and mankind must return to the savage or wilderness state, to subtilty and stratagem, equality and independance.

This principle of self-action and self-legislation,—this unalienable right of individuals, as it is called ; or rather these vain speculations, whenever they prevail, (which, through the goodness of God, we trust never can) will involve the whole in anarchy and extreme misery ; will rush upon us as an armed man, bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth, bind our kings in chains, and our nobles with links of iron :—Will raze our structure, as by law established ; at one stroke sweep it away as a spider's web, and it is well, if it is not alledged, that this is done, out of pure concern for the whole human race ; for “ the nature, as of men
 “ that have sick bodies, so likewise of the
 “ people in the crazedness of their minds,
 “ possess with dislike and discontentment
 “ at things present, is to imagine, that
 “ any thing, the virtue whereof they hear
 “ commended, would help them ; *but that*
 “ *most which they least have tried.*”—But we must not listen to the suggestions of *every spirit*, rather let us observe the maxim of the wisest among men,—“ My son, fear

“ fear thou the Lord and the king: and
 “ meddle not with them that are given to
 “ change: For their calamity shall rise
 “ suddenly; and who knoweth the ruin
 “ of them both?”——

The sages of the gentile world knew, that man is the world in miniature; but it does not appear, that they knew that the earth is full of darkness and cruel habitations; that all the disorder which is in the world, flows from the depravity contained in the heart. The old and new testament, alone communicate this knowledge; “ God saw, that the wickedness of man
 “ was great in the earth, and that every
 “ imagination of the thoughts of his heart,
 “ was only evil continually.” And the Apostle has made this declaration, “ I know
 “ that in my *nature*, dwelleth no good
 “ thing.”

Hence, it comes to pass, that whenever the ignorance and unruly wills of men, are unrestrained by human means, the flood-gates of disorder, ungodliness and wrong
 will

will burst open, break the fences, desolate the inclosures, and deluge the whole land. There already exists in Europe, a most dismal and tragical instance. The internal convulsions of that unhappy state, their contempt of God's holy word, their tumult and misery, should caution and stimulate mankind to repentance and amendment of life; should attach us to our constitution, and teach us to venerate the laws; should incline all ranks and orders of men, continually and with fervency to pray, that God would give to all nations, wheresoever dispersed, unity, peace and concord.

Lust of power, the desire of change, discontent and *pride*, which is the source of all evil, will produce every where the same contempt of those in authority, the same uncharitableness and envy, the same restless and destructive spirit, which is "*earthly, sensual, devilish.*"

No one discharges his duty to God and man, who doth not contribute, what-
ever

ever he can, to regulate every unruly and unholy temper, to assuage every rugged spirit of discontent and bitterness, clamour and malice, and introduce in their stead, the spirit of order, benevolence and peace.

For this purpose, let us carefully observe this Rule, *Speak not evil of the ruler of the people*: This, instead of promoting, is a very great obstruction to unity and love. See you do it not yourself, nor suffer others to do so, for God has *placed him in his stead*, in part, has given him his power, for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.

Be diligent, *this way* to seek the peace and quiet of the city; and God, who is the author of peace, and lover of concord and subordination, will reward thee with peace temporal and eternal, for to him that ordereth his conversion aright, will be shewn the salvation of God.

But

But how true is this saying; there are, that keep themselves in peace, and are in peace with others; and some there be, that neither are in peace themselves, nor suffer others to be in peace. Even so, in some measure, it is now.

Let then the evil day, the principles and combination of those that hate peace, order and tranquillity, teach us to walk in wisdom towards those who are without, that all unwarrantable murmurings, and doctrines full of *deadly poison*, may, by our zeal, directed by knowledge, and tempered by mildness and love, be suppressed.

But if ever Almighty God, who has all authority both in heaven and earth, who doth whatsoever pleaseth him in all places of his empire, for the punishment of our manifold sins and provocations, should suffer the *rod of the oppressor* to rest upon the *lot of our inheritance*, then that liberty, which many want, to do even as they please, and have nobody to call them

them to an account, would soon and triumphantly make its entrance, accelerate the miseries of anarchy, and demolish all those who should have the least spark of national virtue to oppose it.

It requires no invention to substantiate this. The history of this kingdom unfolds an experiment that was made by our predecessors in the last century; when for twenty years, ungodly and worldly men were at liberty to enforce their visionary schemes of civil and religious government, to follow the mazes and corruption of their own hearts. Then, alas! it was that *blood* stained and disgraced our land; that rapine, disorder and ungodliness pervaded all our quarters: Then too, discord, heresy and schism, profaneness, and superstition, defaced the beautiful discipline, and outraged the principles of the reformation.

Now, as the same doctrines, unless repressed, will produce the same dismal and calamitous effects; we, as good citi-

E

zens,

zens, must faithfully guard against the irruption of such anarchy, frenzy and wickedness, lest they again lay waste our dwelling, again violently rob us of the blessings of wealth, peace and godliness.

And in order to this, let us each in our station, govern our lives according to the rule of God's word and holy ordinance.

See, that for the sake of a good conscience, and for the public good, we faithfully serve, honour and obey the king, and all that bear rule under him; that there be no wrath, contention nor malice, but that the peace of God, ruling in the hearts of every rank and order of men, truth and justice, religion and piety may be established among us for all generations.

If in time past you have neglected this duty, to *day*, approve yourself a *faithful* citizen. *Now*, give honour, unto whom honour is due; *now*, submit yourselves to all that are in authority, knowing whose ministers

ministers they are; and give all diligence to do this, for the honour of religion, for the glory of God your Saviour, for the peace and prosperity of the kingdom, and for the increase of your own eternal recompence of reward.

F I N I S.

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F. I. N. I. S.

